RITCHIE PARK ES

PTA NEW­SLET­TER

2011-2012 RPES PTA Officers

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PTA Board of Directors *also includes the following members:*

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### **September 23, 2011**

# School Supply Drive Update

Thanks to everyone who contributed this year! Some of the donated items stayed at Ritchie Park, where teachers can pull supplies for students and classes as ne­cessary.  Five boxes of school supplies were delivered to The National Center for Children and Families in Bethesda, which provides shelter, education, job training, and support programs to families with­out homes throughout the DC area. They were thrilled to re­ceive donations from our Supply Drive!  Well done, Panthers!

# Go Paperless This Year!

Turn in your PTA Paperless Sign-Up forms -- they are due by Fri. 9/30! Help us con­serve paper, copying costs and teacher/volunteer time by sign­ing up for our new Electronic Option. By choosing e-commu­nication options, you will re­ceive informa­tive emails with all the information you need about upcoming PTA events, advo­cacy issues, and volunteer opportunities with convenient links for additional infor­ma­tion!  Download the form from the PTA webpage. Contact Rachel Hicks (see sidebar) with any questions.

# Last Call for Directory Information

All families should have received either an email or a printed letter with login in­formation to the Directory database so that they can verify, add, or correct the in­formation to be contained in the Directory.  If you don't want to use the data­base, simply send an email to Jennifer Young (see sidebar) with the requested informa­tion or download the Directory Form from the PTA webpage. We will accept any submissions made by the end of the day on Mon. 9/26. Thank you.

# MARK YOUR CA­LEN­DARS

**Restaurant Night** will be on Wed. 10/12. Enjoy dinner and dessert at California Tortilla (Rockville Square location) and Ben and Jerry’s, next door. For more infor­mation, contact Suzanne Smith, srrn74@hotmail.com.

**Pizza Bingo** will be held on Fri. 10/28 from 5:30-8 p.m. at St. Raphael’s Trumpet Room, across the street from RPES. There will be pizza and salad from Potomac Pizza, ice cream sundaes for sale, and, of course bingo games with great prizes! $15 suggested donation at the door. Enjoy a fun night out with the whole family! Volunteers are needed. Please con­tact Maria Doyle, Maria@broadsoft.com or Jeanie Glasser, mjglasser@verizon.net.

# FUNDRAISING FORUM

**ELMO Update** We have had a great start to our 2011-12 direct donation campaign to put an ELMO in every classroom. Thank you to Nancy Gauthier who made a donation of $1,500 in memory of her hus­band, Ray Gauthier, the Doyle Family for their dona­tion of $250, and to all the other families who have donated this year. To date we have received $2,280. At the end of last year, we needed 10 ELMOs, and since June, we have raised enough money to reduce that number to 8. Con­sider making a donation so we can reach our goal. If you need a donation form, go to the PTA webpage where you can download the form, or contact Sharri Freedman (see side bar).

**Supermarket Cash Back Programs** Do you buy groceries? If so, you can help support RPES. Luxmanor ES raised over $10,000 last year from Giant by having 100% participation. Simply link RPES to your grocery loyalty card from Giant, Safeway, Harris Teeter and/or Bloom, and you can help raise money! Instruc­tions were sent home in the Panther Packet and on the PTA webpage on how to link your grocery card(s). It takes less than five mi­nutes. Ques­tions, please con­tact Christina Halpern, christinahalpern@comcast.net.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

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| **Sept. 26** | Last day to verify School Directory information |
| **Sept. 30** | Last day to turn in Paperless Sign-up forms |
| **Oct. 4, 7 p.m.** | Volunteer Orientation |
| **Oct. 4, 7:30 p.m.** | PTA Meeting |

# WAYS TO VOLUNTEER

**Volunteer Orientation** will be held on Tues. 10/4 at 7 p.m., followed by the October PTA meeting at 7:30 p.m. Come for this brief summary of important information you need to know to volunteer in the school. Orientation is required for all volun­teers in the school -- even if you’ve taken the training in the past. Childcare for toilet-trained children over three will be provided. RSVP to the office for childcare with the number and ages of your children. Drop-ins will be ac­cepted if space permits. If you can’t attend, contact Rachel Hicks (see sidebar). Ritchie Park values volunteer help!

# Party Money Donations!  Plans are already underway for our Halloween parties, but in order to throw three class parties for our children this year, we need donations to make it happen! Do­nation of $15 per child is suggested.   Send your do­nations in to school in sealed envelopes -- clearly marked "Party Money" and with your child's name and grade – as soon as possible. Separate envelopes for each child are appre­ciated!  CASH is easiest for our Room Parents but checks payable to RPES PTA are also accepted!

**Raffle Coordinator Needed!!** We need someone to organize and run a small raffle during Pizza Bingo on 10/28. Respon­sibilities include pro­curing some raffle prizes, and organizing and running the raffle at Pizza Bingo Night. We are hoping the raffle will gener­ate much needed revenue to support many of this year's PTA programs. Please contact Sharri Freedman (see sidebar).

**Lunch & Recess Volunteers** This year we have implemented an online sign-up for volunteering during Lunch & Recess. To sign up to volunteer for a shift using Volunteer Spot, go to www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/ 6523456346936540113/. You can volunteer at lunch/recess before you complete Volunteer Orientation. See the Listserv message with attached flyer, PTA webpage, or a flyer in the office detailing the sign-up process. Thank you for volun­teering!

# ADVOCACY CORNER

Did you know that Ritchie Park is currently operating at about 135% capacity, meaning we have more students than our building was designed for to provide adequate space and resources?  On Fri. 10/28, Superintendent Starr will release rec­ommen­dations for the FY2013-18 Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) budget.  The CIP is the first step in the school con­struction process.  MCPS has told us that, in this CIP, Dr. Starr will include a comprehensive, cluster-wide solution to ad­dress the overcrowding in our Cluster.  This solution could include any one or more of the following options: a new ES in the RM Cluster (on W. Edmonston Dr. off Wootton Pkwy.), additions at RPES or another Cluster ES, and an addition at Julius West MS.  It is unlikely that all options will be included and, in this fiscal climate, our Cluster will have to compete for funds with other worthy projects.

So, what can you do?  All families at RPES will likely be affected by the recommendations in the CIP budget this year, whether it’s an addition that will benefit the lower grades, an addition at Julius West MS that will benefit the upper grades or a new ES to which some families will eventually go.  And if nothing gets built, then we stay as overcrowded as we are now, and it will likely get worse.  Come to a meeting on **Mon. 11/7**, location TBD, at which MCPS officials will explain their CIP recommendations for the RM Cluster, and keep open the evenings of **Nov. 10 & 14**.  On one of those dates, RM's Cluster Coordinator, and Ritchie Park parent, Cheryl Moss Herman, will testify before the Board of Education on the CIP recom­mendations for the RM Cluster.  It is crucial that we have a huge turnout of parents to support our CIP projects.  Remem­ber, you can make a difference for your children!

# A BIG THANK YOU TO…

* Julie Baron and Lisa Bosse for leading a wonderful Fall Fundraiser and everyone who helped by mak­ing purchases with Innisbrook.
* Nancy Eisner for providing the folders for New Family Orientation.